

Form. U. S. General

# Social Unrest in the United States

*By*  
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*The Corrected Stenographic Report of an Address at the  
Methodist Preachers' Meeting of New York City,  
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on the Russian Situation*

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It is not possible at the present time to gage with accuracy the extent of social unrest in the United States. The data is not to be obtained, not even by committees of politicians who have suddenly discovered a new way to spend the people's money and at the same time to commend themselves both to the passions of the populace and the interests of those who control our economic life. What is possible is to point out the existence of certain definite currents and also their direction; and that is what I shall attempt to do.

In the first place I would analyze very briefly the forces of social unrest. First in the world of labor: On the surface there are, as usual, a number of strikes. That is inevitable in the demobilization both of the army and of war industries. It is inevitable also because the attitudes and policies of the War Labor Board enabled labor to gain some ground during the war which certain leaders of capital are now determined to take away from them. But there is more to these present strikes than either of these causes would indicate. A few days ago the Secretary of the Department of Labor, addressing the conference of Mayors and Governors, declared that the strikes of Paterson, Lawrence, Butte and Seattle were revolutionary in their purpose and conduct—revolutionary in their political sense—that they meant an attempt to change the form of government in the United States. When Mr. John Fitch, the industrial investigator of the Survey Magazine, went to the office of the Department of Labor to ask for evidence in the case, he got none that seemed to him to be adequate. The chief piece of evidence was a quotation from the Union Labor Record of the City of Seattle, which said: "If the strike continues labor may feel led to avoid public suffering by reopening more and more activities *under its own management*. And that is why we say that we are starting on a road that leads *no one knows where*." In it you will observe the proposal is not to take the industries from those who now own them, but to open more industries "under its own management," which labor is now doing to some extent in Seattle through co-operative organization.

But there is something new about these strikes; something which the Secretary of Labor cannot perhaps quite understand in view of his philosophy and affiliations. And what that is in the first place seems to me to be a new morale on the part of labor. It is significant that in each of these four strikes there has been comparatively little violence. In Paterson the police said it was the quietest strike ever known. In Lawrence, despite the most brutal provocation on the part of the police, there has been no serious violence on the side of the workers. In Butte, despite the fact that the strike was under I. W. W. leadership, and that the soldiers were brought in, pickets organized in squads under the control of discharged soldiers in uniform, maintained what was almost perfect order. In Seattle the strikers organized a company of police from their own ranks, composed of about 250 soldiers and sailors in uniform. These men were sent out to maintain order without clubs or weapons. Their motto

was "Order Without Force." They were sent to guard any property which might possibly be molested; they were sent to disperse crowds which gathered and even to secure the adjournment of meetings within halls lest they might become the occasion for disturbance. As a result, at least in part, of this policy there were fewer arrests in Seattle during the general strike than in any corresponding ordinary period of time.

What does this mean, this new sense of restraint and responsibility? Does it mean that as a result of the mobilization of the army the workers have caught the spirit and the method of marching men who can act with restraint and in order? Or does it mean that behind this new morale there is something more significant? Is it the glimpse of a larger purpose than has yet possessed labor in this country? And is it the sobering influence of that larger purpose which is producing this new morale?

There are some evidences of this larger purpose. They appear both in the political realm and in the economic field. On the side of politics there is the spontaneous organization of labor parties in a number of centers, particularly in Chicago and in New York, for the first time in the history of organized labor in this country. It is a direct breaking away from one of the dominant and controlling policies of its president. A large part of the membership of the American Federation of Labor is now organizing itself into a labor party to secure economic change through political action. They have borrowed the principles of their platform very largely from that famous document on the new social order put out by the Labor Party of Great Britain. Their measures they have adapted to American conditions. But the most significant thing about it is that they propose a party of "brain and hand"; they endeavor to join together all those in this country who are willing to contribute by labor of brain or hand to the social welfare.

From now on you cannot properly define labor in this country as simply the workers of the factories, the shops, the mills and the mines. The term labor now in this country has the significance it has long had in Europe; it is now to include the whole productive energy of the working population of this country expressed in every form.

On the economic side there are some indications again of a new purpose. A little while ago the labor forces in Chicago proposed, and I think voted for, a general strike of one day's duration in order, they said, to let the world know "that we are going to lay off for one day from making profits for the bosses." It is just an indication, that is all, that suddenly they had come to a concept that there was something more fundamental to be done than simply to get better wages and shorter hours. But the most significant thing is that proposal recently made to the United States Government in behalf of the most conservative and strongest organized group of workers in the country, the four Railway Brotherhoods, allied with the Federation of the trades engaged in the mechanical work on the railroads. The proposal was that the United States Government, having acquired the railroads, should turn them over to a labor corporation to be composed of all those actually engaged in railway work and management, from the general superintendent to the lowest errand boy. This labor corporation would thus enter into partnership with the United States Government; the Government to furnish credit and capital, the capital of the working corporation to be its operating ability, and the net proceeds to be divided on a definite scheme of equality set forth in the proposition.

Now leaving aside altogether the technique of the proposal; here is the significant thing, as Miss Marot has pointed out in her recent analysis of the labor situation in this country,<sup>1</sup> that for the first time we have a great body of labor in this country recognizing and willing to assume responsibility for operation. It marks altogether a new step; a fundamental, radical change in the attitude.

<sup>1</sup>*The Dial*, Feb. 22, 1919.

purpose and policy of the labor movement in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Is this new consciousness revolutionary? In part it comes from across the water. It marks the fact that just as the war ended the isolation of the American nation, so has it ended the isolation of the American Labor movement. American Labor has been behind all other labor movements in the world in fundamental economic thinking, partly because of the economic circumstances under which it has been developing and operating, and partly because it has been held back by reactionary leadership. But the fundamental ideals and purposes which have been moving the ranks of industrial producers in Europe are now entering into the consciousness and plans and purposes of the workers of the United States. Is this new consciousness and purpose in any sense revolutionary?

A little while ago the Solicitor General of the Post Office department informed a Senate Committee that the labor and radical movement in this country was now revolutionary, that it was proposing to overthrow by violence the Government of the United States. He offered in evidence a large number of papers which he had taken out of the mails since the Armistice was signed. Now to anybody who is not familiar with the phraseology of certain irresponsible papers, representing especially the Syndicalists and the Left Wing of the Socialist movement, it would be easy to draw such a conclusion from the evidence he offered. But when you take the representative organs of the labor and radical movement of the country, instead of finding them to be more violent since the war, I find them to be more sober. There are certain very grave tendencies in some of the more irresponsible radical publications. I will give you three or four quotations from some journals and you can form your own estimate. I think you will find that these are typical of certain tendencies. First from the journal of a trade union, whose editor is a church member and worker of long standing:

*"If European conditions reach America, the cause that produced them there will produce them here; if Big Business thinks we have sent out boys to Europe to make the world safe for Democracy and later they start a high-handed game that out-kaisers the kaiser here, grand surprises await them. We are not going to give up what we have gained, and if Bolshevism or I. W. W.-ism, or any other 'ism' breaks loose, the lords of high finance, we fear, will pay the price. . . . We are bound with red tape so tightly that to get action many times we must break some law, or let the opposing forces beat us to it."*

Observe the impatience of legal restraint.

Now from *The American Bolshevik*, apparently an individually owned publication, which contains the Manifesto of the Left Wing of the Socialist Party of America, unsigned, so names and number unknown. Their program demands among other things:

*"The party must teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of Capitalism, and the establishment of Socialism through a Proletarian Dictatorship."*

From Canada comes word that at a recent convention in the West, representatives of 16 unions voted to secede from the American Federation of Labor and work for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

There is no evidence that such statements represent any considerable tendency.

Here is what *The Seattle Union Record* says about the General Strike:

*"If by revolution is meant violence, forcible taking of property, the killing or maiming of men, surely no group of workers dreamed of such action. But if by revolution is meant that a Great Change is coming over the face of*

<sup>2</sup>The executive body of the United Mine Workers is drafting a bill calling for a five-day week, a six-hour day, wage increases and the nationalization of the coal mines.

the world, which will transform our method of carrying on industry, and will go deep into the very sources of our lives, to bring joy and freedom in place of heaviness and fear—then we do believe in such a Great Change and that our general strike was one very definite step towards it. . . . Some day, when the workers have learned to manage, they will begin managing. It may come all at once or a little at a time. It may come through peace and order, or through chaos and disorder. In a country like ours, we hope for it to come with peace and order, decently, step by step. But how it comes will depend not only on the workers, but mainly on the attitude of the business world."

And now from the I. W. W. It has recently started a new magazine, "The One Big Union Monthly," and here is an article on "The Red Tidal Wave," from which I quote:

"The world will soon find out that the great economic revolution cannot be accomplished through an armed attack by revolting mobs who occupy government buildings and shoot down the officials of the old regime. . . . Unemployment and capitalist repression in various countries may drive hungry and desperate masses to revolts, and drive them up against the machine guns, but the I. W. W. is not doing it. We are too busy educating and organizing to save mankind from disaster, to engage in street work of that kind. In some countries these revolting, desperate masses may come out victorious, and establish a rule of their own, like the Russian Bolsheviki, only to find that they will have to keep on running society on private ownership basis, until industrial organization of the workers is so far advanced, that it can take over the responsibility."

From another article concerning aims and purposes:

"Our aim is not to establish a political dictatorship of the proletariat supported by force of arms, but to remodel the world in such a manner that there shall be nobody to be dictator over. We intend to make everybody a worker of some kind or other, thereby removing conflicting class interests and the necessity for dictatorship."

The New York I. W. W. organ, *The Rebel Worker*, recently announced:

"With the abolition of private ownership we are prepared to so classify the production that textile workers will produce enough to clothe the whole population of the United States by the use of only 50 per cent. of the present labor power, both brain and physical. . . . We are relying on the most intelligent element among the workers for success. The mob element will swing the way the intelligent element concentrates and directs the mass action. . . . The bottom stratum will have to be educated by the class-conscious, organized workers until they acquire the average intelligence of the workers of the New Era, the Industrial Democracy."

"The Textile Workers of the Industrial Workers of the World are organizing technical boards of each subdivision—woolen, silk, cotton, linen, and so forth. We call upon former members, as well as new members who have experience in office work and executive ability, also all others who are workers, to assist us in this work. (By workers we mean all those with experience in any connection with the industry, except corporation boards of directors and stockholders.)"

These are evidences of a sense of responsibility for industrial organization. I would not over-estimate the tendencies evidenced by these quotations, but at least they exist.

We will leave the labor movement there and just for a moment roughly sketch the position and attitude of big business men. Here again you can find some indications of a new spirit and purpose. One section talks of endeavoring to give workers much better conditions. For example, there are certain leading employing interests in this country trying to reverse the economic law that wages always rise after prices and fall before them, by so con-

trolling the market, beginning with steel, that prices shall go down before wages. Certain employing interests are also attempting to develop measures of joint co-operation—the beginnings of a benevolent kind of industrial democracy. Over against that there is a determined attempt on the part of another group, to now push the fight with organized labor to the conclusion, to have it out once for all.

Here and there, among a few men there is evidence of a more fundamental spirit and purpose. There are some men in the world of big business who have begun to realize that what is needed to get us out of this situation without trouble, is to develop a kind of economic democracy in which the workers will be able to have some creative opportunity in industry. That is the most significant thing appearing in the big business world today. It is not to be found in expansive after-dinner speeches under the influence of good food and bad liquor in which gentlemen indicate that there is going to be a new world tomorrow in which the worker is going to control. Such statements as that, when they are compared with what those gentlemen have actually in operation in their own industrial plants, remind me of the resolutions occasionally passed by church bodies. They are evidently intended to be carried into effect after the death of those who pass them. But when you talk with the men who are actually managing the technique of industry, you will find not infrequently a man who realizes that we must now have such changes as will make labor a real working partner in the whole productive process.

We now pass to another significant group of forces. It is the rural interests. Whatever industrial change comes about in the United States will, of course, have to reckon with our large rural population. That rural population has changed since most of you men lived on the farm. It is changing in two ways. In the first place, there is the spread of tenant farming, over 50 per cent. in Kansas, so that the Governor has to recommend a new constitution which would change the whole attitude of the State towards land taxation and ownership. This means a concentration of ownership of farm lands, which is proceeding side by side with the concentration of ownership of capital in the cities. That concentration of farm ownership and increase of tenant farming means that a larger part of those who now work the farms are being pushed slowly down, like the industrial workers in the cities, to lower standards of living, and are coming more and more to be aware that they depend for economic life upon absentee owners and forces controlling the disposition of the product of the farms. Therefore you are beginning to see, out of this economic situation, the inevitable result.

The rural life movement has overcome to a large extent the mental isolation of the farm group. Also they are being taught co-operative organization. What did the milk producers do here a few weeks ago, and what are the cotton growers of the South now doing in deliberately controlling the direction of their labor power and its output? But more significant still is the organization of the Non-Partisan League in the Northwest; an organization which has already reached about 300,000 members in thirteen states, with one of the best devised and most perfect working pieces of political machinery yet appearing in our history, controlling absolutely the legislature of North Dakota, cutting itself loose from the denomination of a press controlled by business interests and running sixty newspapers of its own, including three dailies.

It is from that State that there has come the most statesman-like utterance that I have yet seen from any American public official concerning Bolshevism. The governor of that State recently said: "Here in North Dakota we believe that the best protection against rebellion is to assist rather than to retard evolution, and in this State it is the intention to remove discontent and prevent disorder by removing the legitimate complaints of the people instead of trying to stamp out just grievances." In that State they have

developed a program which includes a large amount of state ownership, affecting grain elevators, mills and banks. It is a part of the program of the Non-Partisan League to seek alliance with the forces of labor in the cities. In North Dakota they have already put through some very good protective labor legislation.

The political possibility of an alliance between the farmers and the city workers is not so significant as the fact that here is a political force working for economic change, which is organized on the occupational basis. Nobody can belong to the Non-Partisan League who is not a farmer. That is the thing to reckon with out there in North Dakota—a change in the fundamental conception of the basis of political action. It is fundamentally a class movement—a movement of the working class on the farms—and it is reaching out and trying to join hands with the movement of the working class in the cities, which, in turn, is trying to include the brain workers. Remember that they have been feeling the power of big business. They have been denied halls to meet in. Their organizers have been run out of town and arrested on trumped-up charges; also do not forget that in that working class on the farms there is a pretty large sprinkling of college people. The workers of both brain and hand are on the farms and if you want to know what they are going to do in social change in this country, watch North Dakota!

Now what about the "intellectuals"—the "intelligentsia"—as they call them in Europe. What part are they to play in this social situation? They are, I believe, the strongest element in the middle class in the United States. They are altogether different from the intellectuals of Europe in two or three very important particulars. They are not very far removed from the soil—the professional workers of this country—the teachers and lawyers, the preachers and physicians, the social service workers and engineers. It is because our trained minds are not far removed from manual labor, and because so many of them are engaged in productive industry that they are distinct from the intellectual class in Europe. Furthermore, this intellectual group has a lot of fundamental religion. They are still, most of them, the embodiment of the religious idealism of the American churches.

With this equipment what are the "intellectuals" going to do in this time of unrest and world change? Already, like the farmers, they have begun to feel the pinch of economic power squeezing a little bit on the standards of living for their children. Their religious idealism has also led many of them to analyze our present economic organization. They have been taught by economic and political scientists the inefficiency and weaknesses in the present method of economy. On moral grounds they have come to see some of its fundamental inequalities. One thing that is moving them powerfully now is the sense of outrage at the profits that have been made out of this war—not, mark you, a sense of outrage against particular individuals, but a sense of outrage at a method of organization which could produce this result out of such a tragedy.

Unless I miss my guess, this sense of moral outrage is going to move the intellectual people of this country to seek and find their way through to some other method of economic organization. They have been and are at present "as sheep scattered abroad without a shepherd," because of the fact that the necessary limitations upon speech and action during the war have in very definite and specific instances been used as a weapon of economic suppression and proscription and to prevent the discussion of fundamental social issues. But now the intellectual life of this country is beginning to recover itself. Here is an appeal from a Committee of Forty-eight to the intellectuals and liberals of this country, calling them to this standard:

*"The future belongs not to the inheritors and manipulators of great wealth, but to the men and women who live by their work of hand or brain and know by hard experience the needs and aspiration of the common life.*



*"It is the purpose of the Committee of Forty-Eight to summon from all parts of the country the leaders of its liberal thought and of its forward-looking citizens, to meet in conference. We hope that out of this assemblage of the hitherto scattered forces of Americanism will come a flexible statement of principles and methods that will permit effective co-operation with organized Labor and Agricultural workers in the tasks of social reconstruction. . . . All minds are awake today as seldom before, all hearts are astir with hopes and open to large purposes; but these minds will shrivel once more into their grooves, these hopes will lose their glow, if we miss this chance to organize the liberal intelligence of America into coherent voice and form. It may be the final opportunity of our generation."*

The question now arises, what are the forces of social unrest aiming at? Is it possible to determine their direction? There are indications of a common purpose to so reorganize the machinery of society as to make it fit in better with the fundamental religious ideals of humanity. To put this thing in one sentence, the currents of social change are moving towards complete economic democracy. They are carrying forward the principles of political democracy which have done so much for the development of mankind into another region. These principles have furnished us with the best type of government which humanity has yet seen, but now, to find their fulfillment, they must be carried over from the political realm into the every-day working life of humanity. They are now to be applied to our economic organization.

It is easier to state this purpose negatively than positively. It seeks to abolish poverty and economic serfdom; to destroy the iniquities and inequalities of the profit or price system, to give human energy in industry as in brain labor a higher goal than the making of money. It is not simply the coming of another class to power, it is the distribution of power in a wider way through the whole of human society. It is more than that. It is a change in the fundamental values of our social organization, so that hereafter the thing that shall count most in social organization shall be productive service and not the acquisition of possessions; so that hereafter the development of humanity and not the production of goods shall be the highest aim and goal of human endeavor.

This is one of the greatest changes that humanity has ever seen. It is comparable to that great change which occurred when our political democracy was born. But it goes farther. It is more fundamental because it reaches down into the very roots of society; into the relationship of man to the resources of the earth by which we live in time and space, and also into the relationship of individuals to each other in social organization. If I were again to define this great change in a sentence, it would be this; that the will of humanity is now seeking to organize a form of human society which will provide the means for the fullest development of all the people and will require from all the people the utmost contribution of service to the common life. This goal is dimly seen as yet, like some far-off mountain peak. It gets defined sharper and clearer only as we move toward it in our slow progress.

Now concerning that goal there is no occasion for argument in a Methodist preachers' meeting. But the question of whether the goal is obtainable and when it is obtainable, depends entirely upon the choice of method. The question of method in social progress is just as fundamental economically and spiritually as is the question of goal. Now in Europe there has, for years, been a discussion as to whether social reconstruction was to be brought about in the political field by state socialism or in the economic field by the actual democratic organization of the productive forces themselves. They began in Europe with the political method which our workers are now adopting. They are

now swinging back towards industrial organization. The choice of methods is still more fundamental. On the one hand there is the method of evolution through political democracy and the gradual application of its principles by discussion and experiment to the common economic life. On the other hand is the method of violent upheaval and overthrow; what has been technically called "the dictatorship of the proletariat."

I have wondered, not infrequently, what people meant by Bolshevism. Of course the most common use is to fling it in denunciation of any man whose argument you cannot meet, or to hurl it as an epithet at the head of a man whom you desire to discredit. But there are definite meanings to Bolshevism, and one of the first things to do is to define it and know what you are talking about when you use the term. I pick up the morning paper and I find this definition from the *Christian Herald*, which goes to the root of the matter in some important particulars:

*"Not the sudden violence of passion let loose, but organized violence, violence deliberately adopted as the most effective way of righting social wrongs, that is the essential spirit of Bolshevism.*

*"Kill, burn—wipe the whole slate bare—begin civilization over again—that is the terrible slogan the Bolsheviks are passing from country to country today."*

The latter part of that definition is totally unfair. That is the slogan only of the anarchists, who were driven out of the socialist movement in Europe years ago and have recently been suppressed by the Bolsheviks in Russia. The first part of the definition comes a great deal nearer being correct. Bolshevism uses the theory, propounded by Karl Marx, that capitalistic society would go on to a great cataclysm and climax in which the proletariat would outnumber all others, and then, because they were in the majority, would establish, *ad interim*, a dictatorship of the proletariat, using it to create a form of organization in which there would be no class war because there would be no classes, but all would be a great brotherhood of co-operative producers. To this has been added the proposal that, since there is a military civilization, when the proletariat establish their dictatorship, they shall arm themselves and disarm the bourgeoisie in order to prevent a counter revolution from overthrowing the will of the majority. That was the purpose and plan of the Bolsheviks and Sparticides.

In this country I do not find yet anywhere, in any publication, the dictatorship of the proletariat accompanied by that doctrine of arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie. I find simply the theory of political dictatorship by the majority for the time being, in order to establish finally a class-less society and complete economic democracy. Now I do not think I need to say to anybody who has ever read my books or followed my discussions anywhere, that with that theory in both aspects I totally disagree. I have always disagreed with it, I have fought it not in the security of middle class audiences, but in labor and socialist halls in this country, face to face with the men who proclaim it; and I expect to keep on fighting it as long as I have the power.

One reason why I totally opposed universal military training, one of the reasons why I insist that the Christian Church is failing now to do its duty by not setting the world afire for disarmament is because of the manifest fact that should present economic conditions continue, and then you arm the people and train them, you are simply playing into their hands and giving them the weapons by which they will presently overthrow the present government. How many Cæsars and Czars do you have to see come down to learn in this country that our future progress lies in taking away the weapons from the hands of the people and destroying them, and then letting us have the settlement of the social question on the basis of reason?

The next thing I have to say is this: that not only am I opposed to that theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat which proposes to uphold it by force of arms, but I am opposed to the theory itself. I have no use for dictatorship in any way, either in government or industry or church. I have been preaching and writing democracy now for twenty years and I am not going to change my principles over night. Furthermore I am against the theory and practice of dictatorship by the proletariat not only because I believe it to be unethical, but also because I believe it to be unscientific. You cannot carry out the change to economic democracy that way, for the simple reason that you cannot control economic production efficiently in the transitional stage by means of one class alone. You have to have the co-operation of everybody that knows how to manage industry if you are going to democratize it. They have found out that much in Russia.

Then there comes the final question as what is likely to happen in this country. Here, of all countries in the world, social and economic change ought to be worked out by the established processes of law and order and political democracy. The change to economic democracy is going to involve, before we get through with it, some very serious modifications in our form of political government. It will involve, in my judgment no modifications of its fundamental principles. This government of ours rests upon the theory that it is not only the right but the duty of men to alter or abolish the form of government if it does not live up to the principles on which the republic was founded. A good many people seem very ignorant of that fact today. The only safe expression for the present determined will to secure economic democracy lies in the fact that we do permit in this country changes in our form of government in order to make it express more fully the fundamental principles. And if the right of discussion to that end could be established in this country we would not be troubled here with Bolshevism very long.

The next question then is this: what is going to happen in the event that present tendencies go on? Let me describe those tendencies as they are now seen by a group of people who want social and political change; who want it without violence, who want it by the established processes of law, order and political machinery. In the first place, by the fortunes of war, a number of the most influential men who stand for that point of view in this country are now in jail. In the second place the agencies of the state created to protect the country in time of war have been carried over unofficially in some places in an attempt to destroy the radical labor movement in time of peace. There is, for example, the perpetuation of that voluntary war time organization of the Department of Justice which was disbanded officially, but which is now being maintained in some states by private money for private purposes. There is extreme brutality evidenced in the conduct of officials in some recent strikes. That is not unfamiliar in this country. What is more sinister is this: there is an immediate proposal of machine guns the minute that any labor disturbance shows its head.

We are troubled just now of course by having to discuss a very dangerous situation with the psychology of war still upon us. Also, there is still left over a good deal of the unexpended animosity of war, now directed against those who disagree with each other concerning this issue. There is also still left over a great deal of the war-time fear and it makes the people afraid that their property interests are in danger, so that they discuss this situation in passion and not with reason. What is worse, there is the spirit of violence made manifest continually in intemperate language and writing, so that the whole atmosphere of force tends to develop.

I foresaw this thing during the war, I foretold it, and endeavored, during the war, to get a discussion of the social issues among certain groups of people in order that this thing might be guarded against.

Now there are three ways for the will of the people to express itself. One way is through political action; another through economic organization and the third is with the mailed fist. Political action for some time has been circumscribed in this country. Socialists have found it difficult to find a hall to meet in. What is happening to economic action? Read the laws that have been introduced in some of the western legislatures, like that which was reported out of the Senate Committee which forbids not only the carrying of the red flag or attending any meeting or making any statement in speech or in writing that tends to overthrow the United States Government, but also declares that a general strike is a revolutionary offence against the United States Government. That was the doctrine which was proclaimed and acclaimed by the American Defense Society concerning the Seattle strike.

I have not time to argue that proposition on its merits. It has long been an axiom with economists that a general strike was revolutionary in its economic application, but whether in its political application or not depends, in my judgment, altogether on the way we approach the industrial situation in this country. If the masses of the people are bent on social change and become convinced that they cannot get adequate expression politically; if they are convinced they cannot get the opportunity to change economic organization by peaceful means, what form will their determination take?

To that question history has given only one answer and there never will be but one. Certain forces have been trying for a long time to build a dam across the popular will all over the world; now the popular will has risen to flood tide. To continue to obstruct it will turn the flood loose over all the fields of life. It is time to stop and think soberly about this question. If the will of the people is able to formulate itself by public discussion and economic experimentation, the path of change will be the path of orderly progress.

In my judgment the prevailing tone of the radicals is now a sober one. They have been sobered by what they have been witnessing in Russia and Germany. If the violent tactics and talk of the privileged classes continues it is a direct incitement to the spirit of anger and violence from below. There are, in my judgment, four groups in this country who are spreading Bolshevism. The first is a few revolutionary agitators who can easily be dealt with under proper methods of law and order and political discussion. The next is those officials who are illegally obstructing the proper expression of the people's will in free discussion and who are misdirecting the agencies of justice in the interests of one of the parties to the industrial conflict. The third is the agencies, both public and private, who are controlling the sources of information in certain interests and are thereby distorting the moral judgment of this country, which is sound if it can get the facts to act upon. The final group is those who are responsible for public utterance, who use epithets when they ought to use arguments and denunciation when they ought to use reason. These are the groups promoting the menace of Bolshevism in this country.

Let the people who are in power take warning from the course of history! Let them remove the causes of injustice and they will remove the expression of injustice! And let the middle class of this country insist that the issue of economic change be settled not in the field of physical force, but in the field of reason and political discussion. If the middle class will organize themselves they can, in my judgment, determine the shaping of the issue and the outcome of it, in so far as this nation is concerned, and also a good deal of the rest of the world.

I ask, in conclusion, what of the church and what of religion? What will be its part? I call your attention to the fact that the Methodist churches are made up mostly of the rural people and the middle class which can decide the situation rightly or wrongly. What responsibility then

has the church concerning that discussion? Two or three things are suggested.

It is suggested that we must balance the scales impartially, and absolutely condemn the wrong on both sides. Of course that is a part of our prophetic duty—to convince the world of sin. But that is not all of it. That will let us off altogether easily and cheaply. There is here something more than moral dereliction on the part of the people on both sides. There are some fundamental iniquities in the economic organization itself which must be removed, and it is for the brains of the church to analyze these iniquities, to single them out and then make the conscience of the church see them and react to them. That is our duty.

Then it is said that we must proclaim the fundamental principles of the new order. Certainly we must. We have been trying to do that for some little time. We have, for example, declared both as the Methodist Church and the Federal Council of Churches that we stand "for the fullest possible co-operative organization of industry and also of the natural resources upon which industry depends." That was purposely made a general statement in order that the conscience of the church should come to accept the general principle. But we cannot stop now with general principles. The world is forming a new order and if we have any message we must outline the elements of a Christian social order; we must make them clear and plain for the people to see and understand and follow. This means that we must begin to define the co-operative control of industry and natural resources. It means that we must begin the fullest discussion among ourselves of the fundamental elements of the new social order. It means not only the widest possible discussion, but very careful experimentation.

It is said also that it is the business of the church to create the atmosphere in which the new order may develop. But there is needed something more than atmosphere. It is power that is wanted. The dynamic of the new order now appearing is human energy in many forms. Its highest form appeared in Jesus, manifesting the divine energy. The spirit of Jesus is not yet much manifest in any of the new movements. The church professes to have that spirit in its care and keeping. Its obligation now is to impart it to humanity in order that the life which is the heart of the universe may flow into these human energies, that they may be moved by love and not by hate, by service and not by gain.

If the church does not accomplish that who then shall do it? And without that spiritual dynamic there will be no new world, but humanity will exhaust itself in intensive conflict and die finally in a desert waste. Life the world wants, and One came crying, "I am come that they might have life—and that have it more abundantly." If we have that life in our keeping now we must pour it into the heart of humanity in this crucial time of toiling and striving. And here and there I see that life bursting out anew in the church today. The one thing that gives me heart in these dark days when the forces of reaction gather, is this: that whenever there is a movement of repression in the world, there always develops in the providence of God the spirit of the missionary and the martyr. I feel this spirit among the younger people of the church for whom perhaps I may say one word here in this presence. I sense it also in the presence of Simeons who have long waited for the coming of the Lord. There are old and young who have caught a new vision that has made the Gospel more real to them, the ministry worth while, and the Christian Church something that they can work through. It has made life itself a new enterprise for them to know that in the teachings of Jesus are the principles of the new order, and in the spirit of Jesus is its vital power. His spirit moves them and the vision that has come to them they will follow at any cost. They are not to be deterred; they have chosen to follow Jesus to the end. And whether their passion for a new world shall finally

find expression within the church or somewhere else, it is for the leaders of the church to determine.

At the end of the meeting at which the above address was given, one or two questions came on the Russian situation. Time did not permit of a detailed answer, and after the meeting the following letter was received, the answer to which is also given:

New York City, March 24, 1919.

Mr. Harry F. Ward,  
Union Theological Seminary,  
Broadway and 122nd Street,  
New York City.

Dear Mr. Ward:

With a view to correcting a certain misunderstanding which we believe exists as the result of your recent publication in the *Social Service Bulletin* of matter concerning the Bolshevik rule in Russia, the undersigned take the liberty of asking you for a brief statement of your personal attitude toward the movement known as "Bolshevism."

We believe that such a statement will do much to clear the air in the present controversy.

F. ERNEST JOHNSON  
FRED WINSLOW ADAMS  
HALFORD E. LUCCOCK  
R. E. DIFFENDORFER  
EDWARD T. DEVINE  
WORTH M. TIPPY  
GEORGE A. COE  
RALPH B. URMY  
J. LEWIS HANCOCK  
RALPH W. SOCKMAN

To Messrs. Johnson, Adams, Luccock, Diffendorfer, Devine, Tippy, Coe, Urmy, Hancock and Sockman:

I am glad to comply with your request for a statement concerning my attitude on the Russian situation and particularly upon the unanswered questions raised in our *Bulletin*. This publication, you will remember, is merely an Information Service going to people who have been specially trained to use and weigh evidence and form their own judgments upon it.

The reports that the economic revolution in Russia has been accompanied by a Reign of Terror and by sexual bestiality have properly aroused the moral indignation of our people. I am convinced from the evidence that these reports are in part true and in part exaggerations, rumors and forgeries, spread in the first instance by those who wish to restore the old regime in Russia. The Decree on the Nationalization of Women is a case in point. Reliable American testimony affirms that in Russia it was never attributed to any but local Anarchist groups and even then is a forgery. I am also convinced that, like the French Revolution, the economic Revolution in Russia has been accompanied by anarchistic murder, theft and rapine, also by deliberate and merciless extermination of those who challenged it. I do not find it possible at the present time to determine the exact degree and location of responsibility for these horrors. They must be judged against the Russian background of historic brutality and the environment of civil war. It is credibly said that every party in Russia practices violence. I believe that much of it could have been prevented by wise diplomacy on the part of the Allies.

What is even more important morally than the excesses of revolutionary days is the fundamental political, economic and sex theory of the Bolsheviki. Neither the exact meaning nor practical operation of the Soviet decree on marriage and divorce is clear. It is, of course, axiomatic in social ethics that sex purity must be maintained. It is especially clear that the development of the spiritual elements of monogamous family life is essential to social progress.

The theory of economic revolution by the dictatorship of the proletariat maintained by force of arms or otherwise is one with which I totally disagree. It leads in-

to rigorous and brutal repression of political oppo- and other economic classes. The method of expro- in Russia has apparently varied from equitable compensation to the most brutal injustice. This must be judged against the background of the origin and administration of Russia's capital wealth by its ruling classes. Of course I have no sympathy with the policy of matching injustice with injustice. Two wrongs never yet made one right. The fact must be faced, however, that wherever the common people suffer from injustice and become convinced that political expression and organization and propaganda for peaceful economic change are denied them, they will inevitably turn to the destructive policy of proletarian dictatorship. Those countries which permit freedom of political discussion and organization, and which will now seek strenuously to remove both the fact and the causes of economic injustice have little to fear from Bolshevism.

What the world particularly needs to know is the practical capacities of the soviet form of political organization and of the mass control of production. In both cases some constructive achievements are in evidence, as is also the fact that the acceptance of economic responsibility and relations with the rest of the world would seriously modify both practice and theory. The methods of communal Russia would never fit our western world, but they might modify at some points our individualism as that quality would, in turn, correct the extremes of Russian communism.

Concerning the question of religion, I object vigorously to the decree which forbids the teachings of religious doctrines in all educational institutions in which general subjects are taught. I am somewhat familiar with such agnostic materialism as characterizes many of the leaders of the Russian revolutionary government. I have found it nearly always accompanied by an idealistic passion for human brotherhood which could be led to co-operate with a socialized religion, and in most cases could be developed into a clearly religious consciousness. The judgment of some religious workers from Russia confirms my experience. They also report the masses beginning again to crowd the churches. Here is a challenge to the Christian spirit. Should Christians merely denounce men and movements which, coming out of darkness and oppression to seek a high goal, blunder into folly and crime? Or, like Jesus, with condemnation for their wrong doing and wrong thinking, but with vast sympathy for them as human beings, should His followers endeavor to help them toward the light?

There lies in the Russian movement a still deeper challenge to organized religion. This movement shares with other organized movements comprising millions of men and women the ideal of a form of human society in which every individual will be accorded the means of development and all will be expected to contribute to the common welfare their productive energy, in socially useful labor of hand or brain, according to their ability. I believe this ideal thus broadly stated to be an expression and in part the creation of Christian social ethics. I do not agree with the Russian definition of this ideal; it is the first blundering attempt to give it organized expression on a national scale. Like political democracy, economic democracy has to find its way by experiment. But this attempt to organize a society on the basis: "To all according to their needs; from all according to their ability," no matter how blundering it may be, flings a thundering challenge to our churches. Where are they going to stand in relation to this great Christian ideal that is now dimly moving the common peoples of the earth? What are they going to do to give this ideal its true definition and application?

You are at liberty to make any use you please of this letter.

Very cordially,

HARRY F. WARD.

